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Dr Wells; And Printed for James
Knapton, at the Crown in St Paul's
Church-Yard.*

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A
DISCOURSE

Concerning the
Great and Indispensable

D U T Y

O F A

DECENT and REVERENT
Behaviour in CHURCH

At A L L Times,

And more especially in the
Time of Divine Service.

By EDWARD WELLS, D. D. Rector
of *Blechly* in Bucks.

L O N D O N,
Printed for *James Knapton*, at the *Crown*
in *St Paul's Church-Yard*. 1716.

Price 3d 100 for 1 l.

1 A

DISCOURSE

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Worship

At A



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Time of Divine Service.

By EDWARD WATTS, D.D. Rector
of Exeter in 1764.

L O N D O N

Printed by J. Smith, in Pall-mall, 1764.

Price 3s. 6d.

To the Parishioners of Blechley in BUCKS.

IT has been a great Satisfaction to Me for Many Years, that the Sermons which I preach'd at my First coming to Cotesbach in Leicestershire, concerning the great and indispensable Duty of a Reverent Behaviour in Church, by GOD's Blessing had so good an Influence on my Congregation there, as quickly to bring it to a Regular Observance of the Directions prescrib'd in the Book of Common Prayer for the Behaviour of the People through the several parts of Divine Service, and so to a Reverent Behaviour in Church.

However, Persons of other Parishes hap'ning sometimes to come to Church there on Special Occasions, (for I Always knew it my Duty, Not to give the least Encouragement for Any to Straggle at their own Pleasure from their Own Parish Church; and I have therefore More than Once actually and publickly forbid such as I judg'd Guilty thereof, Coming to my Church there,) and seeing some such of Other Parishes to behave themselves Not with that Reverence they ought, who upon my taking Notice to them of such their Irreverence, alledged (as by way of Excuse) that it was no other than the usual and general Behaviour of the Congregation in their Own Church: Hereupon I took up an Intention, Not to content my self with what (by

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G O D.

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G O D's Blessing) I had done in my Own Congregation of Cotelbach, but also to endeavour what in me lay, to bring Other Congregations that were Deficient herein, to a Sense and Practice of their great and indispensable Duty in this weighty Point, by Publishing a short Discourse to that Purpose.

Being by G O D's Providence, in a manner altogether Unexpected, and consequently Unsought, become the Minister of Blechly, and finding More Occasion than I thought to have found in your Congregation, for to teach the Necessity of Reverent Behaviour in Church, you may Remember I could not Forbear in my very First Sermons to touch upon this great Duty, so far as Time and the special Solemnities of the Days would give leave. This I could not forbear or delay to do, as Knowing most certainly, that if We will serve God Acceptably, We must serve him with Reverence and Godly Fear, as we are plainly taught Hebrews xii. 28. And therefore that All such, as do behave themselves in Gods Service without Reverence and Godly Fear, do come together to Church Not for the Better, but for the Worse, (as St Paul says 1 Cor. xi. 17.) Namely, by their Irreverence their very Prayers become Sin, which is set forth in Psal. cix. 7. as One part of the sad Condition of the Worst of Sinners; and so That which should have been for their Welfare, becomes unto them an Occasion of Falling (Psal. lxi. 23.) that is, in plainer Words, All such as do Not behave themselves Reverently in Church, do by Coming thus to Church increase

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increase Not their Salvation, but their Damnation. Wherefore being most Unwilling, that Any of you should so much as One single time more lose the Benefit of Coming to Church by thus Misbehaving your selves there, and instead of pleasing G O D, should only displease and provoke Him, and so increase your Sin and Damnation; I could Not (out of my Christian Love and Tenderness for you on one side, and out of my Christian Zeal for GOD's Honour on the other side) Forbear or Delay telling you at the very First, what is your indispensable Duty in this Case, so far as I had Opportunity.

And because I had not Then Time to say Any more, as also because in so large a Parish it is Not to be doubted, but Many were then Absent, and so did not hear what I then said: Therefore I resolv'd without any longer Delay to set about putting in Execution, what I had for some time intended; and forthwith to draw up and publish the following Discourse; that so I might put it into the Hands of your Whole Parish, for your Reading over and over again, and thereby becoming sufficiently instructed as to the Necessity of a Reverent Behaviour in Church, and that as more especially in the Time of Divine Service, so also at all other Times.

Among other Means taken Notice of in the following Discourse, which are to be used by Persons for to behave themselves Reverently and Duly in Divine Service, I have particularly observ'd, that it is expressly requir'd by the 18th Canon, (that is, the Law or Rule of our most Christian Church) that Persons say in their due Places Audibly with the Minister the Confession;

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Lord's Prayer and the Creed; and make such other Answers to the Publick Prayers as are appointed in the Book of Common Prayer. *With what good Reason the Wisdom of our Church-Governours require this, and How Blameable They are that do not observe this Direction, may appear among other Considerations from This, which having Omitted in the following Discourse, I set down here; Namely, that such Persons do not serve God so much, as did the Jews of Old, whom yet God reproves for their Service as Not being Acceptable to him. For those Jews did draw nigh unto God with their Mouth, and honour him with their Lips, tho' their Heart was far from Him, as appears from Isai. xxix. 13. and Mat. xv. 8. But as for such Persons in our Christian Congregations, who Carelessly Neglect to say those Parts of our Divine Service, which belong to and are Proper for them to say; Not only the Hearts of these are Far from God, as were the Hearts of the Jews, but also They do not so much as draw nigh to God with their Mouth, nor Honour him with so much as their Lips, which the Jews did. And therefore if God would not accept of the Service of the said Jews, Much less will he accept of the Service of such Christians. Sure I am, that as God requir'd of the Jews by the Prophet Hosea Chap. xiv. 2. to render unto him the Calves of their Lips; so He requires of us Christians by the Apostle St Paul, Hebr. xiii. 11. to offer the Sacrifice of Praise to Him continually, that is, the Fruit of our LIPS. Whence by the way it appears, how much it is the Duty of such as can* Read,

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Read, but not say without Book the Parts of Divine Service belonging to the People, to provide themselves with Common Prayer Books, that they may serve GOD as he requires them in the Texts last mentioned.

I must not forget to observe, that you have the Happiness to have One Inducement or Motive to a Reverent Behaviour in Church, which (to the Shame of Those whose Doors the fault lies) Many, if not Most other Parishes Want. For when Churches are suffered to become so Mean and Undecent, as to be like Barns or Stables; such their Meanness is naturally apt to make the People, who are govern'd chiefly by their Sense, to forget the Dignity of Churches, and the Reverence due to them as Houses of GOD; and so to behave themselves much after the same Irreverent manner, in Churches as if they were Really in Barns or Stables. But your Church being (by the pious and great Cost of Mr WILKINS) made lately very Beautiful, such its Beautifullness natural tends to put you in mind of the Dignity of the Place, and the Reverence due to it; so that you become more Inexcusable before GOD, if to the Beauty of your Church it self, you are not Careful to add also the Beauty of your own Reverent Behaviour. Which Two together make up that Beauty of Holiness, so often mentioned and requir'd by God in the Book of Psalms, as Psal. xvi. 9. (and according to the Translation in the Middle of the Bible) Psal. xxix. 2. and Plal. cx. 3.

To conclude, as it has pleased GOD to make me your Spiritual Watchman or Minister, and
as

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as he do's require of me as such, to warn the wicked from his wicked Way; so it is in order to Discharge this my Duty in the most profitable manner to you, that I have Printed and Publish'd this Discourse to warn you of the Great and Provoking Sin of an Irreverent Behaviour in Church; whereby I shall have the Satisfaction of having done what is requir'd (according to Ezek. iii. 18, 19.) of Me in order to deliver my own Soul, altho' this Discourse should not have its due Effect on all of you. But I am willing to hope the Best, and desire you seriously to consider, that (as St Paul speaks Heb. xiii. 17.) I only watch for your Souls, as One that must give an Account of what I have done in order to promote your Salvation; and that you are to Obey and Submit to the Instructions I give you, that I may give an Account of you with JOY; and not with GRIEF, by reason of your having Not obey'd or follow'd my Instructions: For That will be Unprofitable for you at the Day of Judgment, when it shall be a Means of increasing your Guilt, and consequently your Damnation. Wherefore that on the contrary I may at the Day of Judgment be Able to give Account of you with JOY, as Those who have carefully obey'd and follow'd my Instructions, and thereby the Commandments of GOD, is and ever shall be the most earnest Prayer of your Faithful Minister and Servant for Christ sake,

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Ascension Day,
1716.

Edw. Wells.

*The Great and Indispensable Duty of a
Decent and Reverent Behaviour in
Church at All Times, and more espe-
cially in the Time of Divine Service.*

IT is just Matter of great Grief to all truly Pious Persons, to observe how Many there are among us, that *do not so much as Come* to the Publick Worship of God, even on the Sabbath or Lord's Day. And it is still more Matter of Grief, to observe how Many there are among them that *do come to Church*, who behave themselves *there* after such a manner as plainly shews, either that they are *very Ignorant* of that *Decent and Reverent Behaviour*, which is strictly requir'd by God of them *in his Church*, or else that they are *very Wicked* in daring to behave themselves so *Undecently or Irreverently in the Church or House of God*, when they *know* it their Duty to do otherwise.

This Discourse is design'd for the Benefit chiefly of *Those*, whose *Misbehaviour in Church* is principally owing to their *Ignorance or Want of Better knowing* their Duty to the contrary; and who are Desirous to serve God as they ought, and are therefore Desirous also to be taught, *what* is that *Reverent Behaviour*, which God requires of them in his Church, and are sincerely resolv'd to practise the same for the

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The Duty of Reverent

Future. As for *Those*, whose *Misbehaviour in Church* is owing (not to their *Ignorance* or *Want of Knowledge*, but) to the *Wickedness of their Hearts* or *Want of Grace*, which makes them *do*, what they *Already know* they *ought not to do*; since bare Instruction and Knowledge cannot have their Influence upon them, *severer Methods* appointed by God, and entrusted by Him with the Governours of his Church, ought to be made use of toward them.

What I judge most proper and useful to lay here before *Those*, whose *Misbehaviour in Church* is, or has been hitherto, principally owing to their *Ignorance*, I shall reduce under these following Heads, namely,

I. I shall shew the great Duty of a *Decent and Reverent Behaviour in Church* at *All Times*, and more especially in the Time of *Divine Service*.

II. I shall shew that this Duty is *indispensable*, or of so great Importance, that *our Eternal Salvation depends* on the Practice of a *Decent and Reverent Behaviour in Church*, as well as on the Practice of any other Religious Duty.

III. I shall shew that, As it is the Duty of *Ministers* to take care to *instruct their People* concerning the *Necessity* of a *Decent and Reverent Behaviour in Church*; so it is likewise the Duty of *Church-wardens* by their Solemn Oath to take special Care, that Persons *do actually behave* themselves *Decently and Reverently in Church*; and to *present* All such as shall not do so after due Admonition. And in like Manner I shall shew, that it is the bounden Duty of *all Parents*

Parents to take special Care that *their Children*; and the bounden Duty of *all Masters and Mistresses* to take care that their *Apprentices* or *Servants*, do behave themselves Decently and Reverently in Church. And further I shall shew that it is the Bounden Duty of all *Landlords* and *Persons of Better Quality*, both to give good Example themselves to their *Tenants* and other *Inferiors*, and also to use their Authority and Influence over others, to induce them to a Decent and Reverent Behaviour in Church.

VI. and *Lastly*, I shall take Notice of *certain Particulars*, which are *inconsistent* with a Decent and Reverent Behaviour in the Time of Divine Service; and which therefore ought to be *presently Reform'd* by All such as will discharge their Duty to God as they ought.

I.

I am to shew the great Duty of a *Decent and Reverent Behaviour in Church* at *All Times*, and more especially in the Time of *Divine Service*.

That it is our Duty to shew a *Decent and Reverent Regard* to any *Church* or *House of God*, not only while Divine Service is performing therein, but also at *All other times*, is evident from several Passages of Holy Scripture. The first I shall mention, shall be that remarkable one, *Levit. 19. 30. Ye shall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my Sanctuary: I am the Lord.* Now the Word *Sanctuary* is deriv'd from the Latin Tongue, and in plain English signifies a Place consecrated to, and set apart for the Worship of God, which we now a-days commonly

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call a Church : So that this Command, *Ye shall reverence my Sanctuary*, is the same as to say according to the common way of speaking now in use among us, *Ye shall reverence my Church*.

It appears therefore, that we have here a plain Command given us by God to *Reverence any Church* we come into, whenever it be that we come into it: For it is not said, *Ye shall reverence my Sanctuary or Church, while Divine Service is performing therein*; but without any such restraining our Reverence to the Time only of Divine Services, it is said in general, and so in respect of *All times*, *Ye shall reverence my Sanctuary or Church*, namely *whenever ye come into it*.

And that this is the True meaning of the said Command, will further appear from considering the *Reason* thereof. For when it is said, *Ye shall reverence My Sanctuary or Church*, thereby is plainly signify'd, that the *Reason*, why God commands us to reverence a Sanctuary or Church, is this, namely, because it is *HIS Sanctuary or Church*, that is, a place Consecrated to, and set apart for His Worship. But now a Church is a Place *consecrated and set apart* for the Worship of God, not only while it is Actually made use of in the Worship of God, but also at *All Times else*, or when it is not actually made use of in God's Worship. Wherefore, since the *Reason*, why we care to *Reverence a Church*, is, because it is a Place *consecrated and set apart* for the Worship of God; and since this *Reason* holds good at *ALL Times*, even when Divine Service is Not actually performing

Behaviour in Church.

forming in a Church; therefore it evidently follows, that by the forementioned Command of God we are requir'd to *reverence Churches at ALL Times*, even when Divine Service is not performing in them.

Further it is observable, that the Word *Church* is deriv'd from the Greek Tongue, and in plain English signifies *the House of the Lord*, or *Lord's-House*. Namely, as what is call'd in the Old Testament *the Sabbath*, in the New Testament (*Revel. 1. 10.*) and thence commonly by us Christians, is call'd *the Lord's-day*; so in like manner, what is call'd *the Sanctuary* in the Old Testament, is by us Christians commonly call'd *the Church*, that is, *the Lords-house*. Whence appears the Reasons why this Command to *Reverence the Sanctuary or Church*, is join'd with the other Command to *Keep the Sabbath*, not only in *Levit. 19. 30.* but also in *Levit. 26. 2.* Namely, these two Commands are thus twice join'd together, because the Reason of them Both is much One and the same. The Reason, why we are commanded by God to *Keep the Sabbath*, is this, because it is the *LORD'S DAY*, that is, (so far as relates to the present purpose,) the Day in the Week, which God has hallow'd or set apart from Common-Business, and more peculiarly for his Service. In like Manner the Reason, why we are commanded by God to *Reverence the Sanctuary or Church*, is this, because it is the *LORDS-HOUSE*, that is, the House in the Parish, which is hallow'd or set apart from Common Business, and more peculiarly for God's Service.

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It thus clearly appearing, that the Reason why we are commanded to *Keep the Sabbath*, and to *Reverence the Church*, is thus One and the same in respect to the Relation the Sabbath and Church have to God; the *Church* being the *LORD's-HOUSE*, as well as the *Sabbath* is the *LORD's-DAY*; hence may be drawn several Arguments to prove and further enforce the Duty I am speaking of.

It is acknowledg'd that the Command to *keep the Sabbath* obliges us to *keep it*, not only *during the time of Divine Service*, but also *All the rest of the Day*, by abstaining from our Common Trades and Business, and by employing ourselves in Reading the Bible or some other Book of Religion at Home, or the like. And the Reason why we are thus to *Keep holy*, not only *that Part or those Hours* of the Sabbath, which we spend in the Publick Worship of God; but also *All the rest of the Sabbath*, is this, because it is the *LORD's DAY*, not only *while* we are at Divine Service, but also *All the other Hour* of the said Day. Wherefore in like manner it is to be acknowledg'd by All that will be guided by Reason and Truth, that the Command to *Reverence the Church*, obliges us to *Reverence it*, not only *during the Time of Divine Service*, but also at *All other Times*, by behaving ourselves Decently and Reverently whenever we come into it, and the like: Forasmuch as the Church is the *LORD's HOUSE*, not only *during the Time of Divine Service*, but also *at All others Times*.

We

We know that God being All-knowing, did from the Beginning of the World foresee and know, what Evils and Sins the Devil would tempt Men to. And therefore God, out of his infinite Goodness and Love to Mankind, provided sufficient Means to preserve Men from Sinning, and to enable them to know and Do their Duty, would they but make a due Use of the gracious Means thus provided by God for their Good. Now since We find by sad Experience, that there are too many among them that call themselves Christians, who profess a *great Regard* to the LORD's-DAY, and at the same time are so Weak and Mistaken, as to think they ought *not to shew any Regard or Reverence* to the Church or LORD's-HOUSE; it may be very Reasonably suppos'd, that God foreseeing that the Devil would endeavour to seduce Men into the said sinful Error, did therefore, in order to prevent Men from being thus seduced, see it of Good and Excellent Use in it self, to *join together* the two Commands of *Keeping the LORD's-DAY, and Reverencing the LORD's-HOUSE*. For hereby is most plainly signify'd, that *What GOD has JOIN'D together, NO MAN ought to put ASUNDER*; and consequently that whosoever thus separates the two Commands aforesaid, as to *Keep the Sabbath or LORD's-DAY, and Not to Reverence the Church or LORD's-HOUSE*, He is no other than One seduced by the Cunning of the Devil into a Sinful Error, and by such his Practice sins against God, by Manifestly transgressing God's Command to *Reverence his Church or House*.
And

And I can't but think it again worth the Remark-
ing, that the Better to prevent Men from being
thus seduced by the Devil to *put asunder*, what
God has *join'd together*; it has pleas'd the Wisdom
of God, to *join together* the two Commands of
Keeping his DAY and Reverencing his HOUSE,
More then Once, *viz. Levit. 19. 30, and again,*
Levit. 26. 2. Namely, that so his Joining to-
gether these two Commands might be the More
taken Notice of, as done *on Purpose* and to some
Important End; whereas had they been join'd
together but Once, it might have been esteem'd
Accidental, or at least of No such great Conse-
quence as to be a Merciful and Special Means
to prevent Men, (if they would duly attend it)
from being so seduced into the *Sinful Neglect of*
Reverencing the Church, or House of God, at
All times.

The two Texts already mention'd, *viz. Levit.*
19. 30. and Lev. 26. 2. are enough to shew the
great Duty we lye under to *Reverence Churches*, at
All times. However I shall add some other Pas-
sages of Scripture, not only because they will serve
to shew us further the Necessity of practising this
Duty, but also because they will serve to shew us
One Way more especially, whereby we are to
reverence Churches. Such is *Exod. 3. 5.* where
God thus speaks to *Moses*; *Put off thy Shoes*
from off thy Feet, for the Place, whereon thou
Standest; is HOLY GROUND. And in
like manner God speaks to *Joshua*, in Chap. 5.
15 of the Book of *Joshua*: *Loose thy Shoe from*
off thy Foot, for the Place, whereon thou standest,
is HOLY. Now it is to be known, that in
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those Eastern Countries of the Word where the Old Testament was writ, and Most of the New, *Putting off the Shoes* was formerly, and still is, one Way of *shewing Reverence* to Places, as *Putting off the Hat* is among Us. Wherefore God's Commanding *Moses* and *Joshua* to *put off their Shoes*, was the same as to command them to *shew Reverence to the Place*, where each stood. And the Reason, why they were thus to *shew Reverence to each Place*, was because each was *Holy*, that is, had a special Relation to, or was in a special Manner design'd and set a-part for God's Service. Wherefore the *same* or *like Reverence*, that was here expressly requir'd by God to be pay'd by *Moses* and *Joshua* to the Place where each stood, *ought to be pay'd* to all the Places set apart for God's Publick Worship, there being the same or like Reason for the One as for the Other; forasmuch as every such Place of Religious Worship is *Holy*, as well as was the Places where *Moses* and *Joshua* stood. And accordingly such was the Practice of Religious Persons in the Times of the Old Testament, as there is great Reasons to believe upon many Accounts, particularly from Chap. 5. 1. of *Ecclesiastes*, where we read this Direction or Command; *Keep thy Foot, when thou goest to the House of God*: Where for the true and plain Meaning of *Keeping thy Foot*, we must have Respect to the foremention'd Custom of *Putting off the Shoes*, by way of *shewing Reverence* to a Place. So that the Plain Meaning of this last Text will be as if the *Ecclesiastes* or Preacher had said: *Be Careful to shew Reverence to*
the

the House of God, when then goest thereto, by putting off thy Shoes when thou comest into it.

Nor is it to be past by, that this Duty of *shewing Reverence to Holy Places* was so Great in the Esteem of *St Stephen*, the first Martyr of our Blessed Saviour, that He judg'd the Command given by God to *Moses* for doing so, to deserve particular Notice in his Discourse to the *Jews*; and accordingly we have the said Command repeated *Act. 7. 33.* *Then said the Lord to Him, Put off thy Shoes from thy Feet: for the Place, where thou standest, is HOLY Ground.* And we are inform'd that the *Jews* do to this Day keep up some Remainder of this Ancient Way of shewing Reverence to the Place of God's Worship, when they go into their *Synagogues*; as also do the very *Turks*, when they go into their *Mosques* or Places of Religious Worship. So that the Righteousness of the *Jews*, nay of the very *Turks*, do's in this case exceed the Righteousness of Many, that call themselves Christians; Whereas our Saviour has told us and plainly forewarn'd us, that *Except our Righteousness exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees,* (that is, of the *Jews*, and therefore much more of the *Turks*) *we shall in no Case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Wherefore in order to this we must at the least be as Careful, as are the *Jews* and *Turks*, to shew that Reverence to the Places of God's Worship, which he requires of Us according to the Custom of the Country wherein we live. Since then *Putting off the Hat* is the Way in these Western Parts of the World, to shew Reverence

verence to a Place, as *putting off the Shoes* is the Way in the Eastern parts of the World; every Person among Us that will discharge his Duty to God in this respect, ought to *shew Reverence to any Church* he goes into, by *putting off his Hat* when he enters into it, and *Keeping it off* till he comes out again: For the plain Meaning of *Eccles. 5. 1.* exprest agreeably to our Customs or Fashions, is this: *Take care and put off your Hat, when you go into the House of God, or Church.*

I shall add but one Consideration more to set the Reader upon the Practice of this Duty; and it shall be a very weighty and affecting One, if the *Practice* of our Saviour *Christ himself* can be of any Weight and Influence with Him. It is then very Remarkable, that we read but twice (as I remember) that *Christ* exercis'd any Publick Act of Civil Authority, during his stay here on Earth; and Both Times it was upon the same Account, namely, to *preserve the Honour and Reverence due to the House of God*, and at All Times, even when Divine Service is not performing therein. The first Time is taken Notice of only by *St John* in Chap. 2. 13--17 of his Gospel: The other Time is taken notice of by all the other three Evangelists, and most particularly by *St Mark* in Chap. 11. 15--17 of his Gospel. From the Accounts given of this Matter in the said Gospels, the Reader may observe, how *very Zealous* our Saviour was, that due *Honour and Reverence* should be shewn to the *Temple* at All Times: And that for these Reasons, because at All Times it was his
Father's

Father's House (*Joh. 2. 16*) and also set apart for his Publick Service, and to be *an House of Prayer* (*Mark 15. 17.*). Which Reasons equally belonging to all Christian Churches at *All Times*, it follows, that according to our Saviour's Doctrine and Practice, We ought to pay *Reverence to All our Churches at All Times.*

Indeed to Me it seems Reasonable to think, that our Blessed Saviour by his Divine Knowledge of All things foreseeing, that in future Ages Many, that should profess to be his Disciples, would not only become Faulty themselves, in *Not shewing Reverence to his Churches*, but would be so far misled as to go about to *seduce Others*; in order again to Prevent the more Mens being so seduced, thought fit to shew *greater Zeal* in preserving the *Reverence* due to God's Houses or Places set apart for God's Publick Worship, than He did in *any other Instance*: Thereby namely to teach his Disciples that *Reverencing* or *Not Reverencing* such Places or Churches, was not a small Matter or slight Offence in the Sight of God, but of great Importance to our Pleasing God, and consequently to our obtaining Salvation.

St *John* in Chap. 2. 17. of his Gospel particularly remarks, that upon Christ's thus shewing his Zeal for Reverencing the House of God, *His Disciples remember'd*, that it was written, (*Psal. 69. 9*) *The ZEAL of THY HOUSE has eaten me up.* How far then from being *like* unto Christ, or following Christ's Example, and consequently How far from being *True Disciples* of Christ, must All such be, who are so

so far from being concern'd or endeavouring to *make Others* shew Reverence to Churches, that they *neglect to do it Themselves*! How will such be Able to look Christ in the Face, when he comes to be their Judge! For if Christ, even while he was here on Earth and in his State of Humiliation, did yet *make a Scourge* to whip and drive them out of the Temple that did not *shew Reverence* thereto even when Divine Service was Not performing therein: How much *sover Punishment* shall He, when he comes to judge the World and to take Vengeance of the Wicked, inflict upon All such as pretend to be his Disciples, and yet follow not the Example he has set them, in being *Zealous for the Reverence due to God's Houses or Churches*; and that at *All Times*, even out of the Time of Divine Service; but on the contrary follow the wicked Example of Those, whom he *scourg'd* out of the Temple for not *shewing Reverence* thereto. How much *sover Punishment* shall he inflict upon such *false Disciples*, unless they prevent it by a speedy Repentance?

I have been the Longer in setting forth the great Duty of *shewing Reverence to Churches*, even when Divine Service is not performing therein; partly because some, who behave themselves Reverently *in the Time* of Divine Service, yet are wont to shew no Reverence to Churches at *Other Times*, and so are Wanting in the Discharge of their Duty; and partly because when Men are once made Sensible, that it is their Duty to behave themselves Reverently in Church, at *All Times*, they will thereby be the sooner made sensible, that it is their Duty so to

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do, during the Time of Divine Service, which I proceed to next.

Common Reason will tell us, that if it be our Duty to behave our selves Reverently in Church, only because it is *God's House*, and though we are not speaking to God himself, or He to Us; then it must be much More our Duty to Behave our selves Reverently, when we are not only in *God's House*, but are also speaking to God, or He to us, that is, during the Time of Divine Service. However, because some may be so Deaf to Reason alone, as not to hear what it so plainly tells them; therefore I shall set down two or three Texts of Scripture to the same Purpose Thus *Psalms* 2. 11. *Serve the Lord in FEAR, and rejoyce unto him with REVERENCE.* And *Psalms* 89. 7. *God is greatly to be FEARED in the ASSEMBLY of the Saints; and to be had in REVERENCE of All them that are round about him.* To which I shall add but one Text more, viz. *Heb.* 12. 28, 29. *Let us have Grace, whereby we may serve God Acceptably, with REVERENCE and Godly FEAR. For our God is a Consuming Fire.*

The first of these three Places of Scripture teaches us, that in general, or at All Times, We are to take Care, that while we are serving God, whether in Publick or Private, we behave ourselves so as shews that we have a due Fear and Awe of God; and consequently that We are guilty of no Vain or Wanton Behaviour, as Smiling, Laughing, Gazing about, Playing or Fooling with any thing, Talking or Walking about,

bout, or the like. And because we may be most likely to be Faulty herein, when we are *Rejoycing unto God*, or Praising him with Joy for his Goodness and Mercy; therefore the Holy Spirit has taken special Care to teach Us in the latter part of the same Text, that We must even *rejoyce unto Him with Reverence*, that is, We must take special Care, that when we *Rejoyce* before God, and Praise and Thank him for his Mercies, *Our Joyfulness* be express'd with a due *Reverence* to the Divine Majesty; not in a Familiar or any Disrespectful manner, such as *Lolling on our Elbows* or *on a Seat*, much less *Sitting down*, which is the most Familiar and Disrespectful Posture a Man can be guilty of before his Betters. And whereas the Text expressly commands us, even to *Rejoyce unto Him* (that is, God) *with Reverence*; it thereby implies, that it is much more Requisite and Suitable that we *Confess our Sins* and *Pray* unto God for the *Pardon* of them, and for all other his *Blessings* Spiritual or Temporal, with the *greatest Degree of Reverence*, or in the most *humble manner*, namely on our *bended Knees*.

Sure I am, *this* was the *Reverent Posture* made use of by the *Saints of Old*, and by our Blessed *Saviour* himself, when he or they pray'd to God. Thus *Luk. 22. 41. And He* (that is, *Jesus*) *was withdrawn from them about a Stones cast, and KNEELED down and pray'd*. So *Daniel* under the Old Testament did, as we read *Dan. 6. 10. Now when Daniel knew that the Writing was sign'd, He went into his House, and his Windows being Open'd in his*

Chamber toward Jerusalem, He **KNEELED** upon his Knees three times a Day, and pray'd, and gave thanks before his God. So St Paul and all the Saints that were with him, as we read *Act. 20. 36.* And when he had thus spoken, He (that is Paul) **KNEELED** down, and pray'd with them All; the rest Kneeling as well as St Paul; this being sufficiently imply'd, tho' not express'd. For it is not to be doubted, but St Paul being the Chief Person and the Teacher and Guide, the rest follow'd his good Example, in using the same Reverent Posture of Kneeling during his Prayer, as He did. And this is to be still the less doubted, because we read in the 5th Verse of the very next Chapter (*Act. 21.*) that at another Time St Paul and All they that were with him, when they went to Prayer, *kneeled down*, tho' it were on the bare Sea-shore. For thus we read *Act. 21. 5.* And when we had accomplish'd those days, we departed and went our way: and they All brought us on our way with Wives and Children, till we were out of the City: and **WE KNEELED** down on the **SHORE**, and pray'd. Where by we *kneeled down* is meant the whole Company, that was with St Paul on the Shore, as appears from the following v. 6. And when **WE** had taken our leave **ONE** of **ANOTHER**.

And this last Passage of Scripture is of Excellent Use, to show how Weak and altogether insignificant is the Excuse which some are apt to make for *Not Kneeling*, namely, that *they have No Mat to kneel upon*. 'Tis true, that they are not requir'd by God to kneel on the bare Ground,

Ground, and not on a Mat; but are graciously indulg'd the Use of a Mat or the like, if they please and have one Ready. However their Want of a Mat will not excuse their Want of using that Reverential Posture, of Kneeling which is fuitable to be us'd, while they are Praying. If they can and will not be at the small Charge of getting a Mat, the Fault is Theirs; and ~~this~~ Fault of theirs will not excuse their ~~other~~ Fault in Not Kneeling. If it happens on any other account that they have not a Mat, yet neither will this Excuse them from their Duty in Praying to God with due Reverence, or with bended Knees even on the *bare Ground*; since it is no other they see than what the Holy Apostle *St Paul* and all the *Saints* that were with him, did formerly on the very *Sea-shore*; nay, no more than our Blessed *Saviour himself* did in the Garden of *Gethsamana*. So that, this Example of our Lord and Saviour himself leaves All Persons (let them be Never so Great) *Inexcusable*, who neglect or refuse to Kneel at Prayers, because they have not Mats or the like to Kneel upon.

Now as the forecited Text, *Psal. 2. 11.* teaches us, that in general or at *All Times* we must *serve God with Fear, and even joyce unto him with Reverence*; so the other Text, *Psal. 89. 7.* do's more particularly teach us, that God is greatly to be Fear'd in the *ASSEMBLY* of the *Saints*, and to be had in Reverence of *All them that are round about Him*. that is, that in Church or the Place of God's Publick Worship, we ought to be *More than ordinarily*

Careful to Behave our selves with *Fear* and *Reverence*, and to express our *Fear* and *Reverence* in the *highest* manner, that thereby we may give Good Example to Others, and contribute to the *begetting* in them a *Due Fear* and *Reverence* of God. And therefore as it is our Duty to Pray unto God *in Private* on our *Knees*, and without Lolling or any Vain or Wanton Posture, so likewise is it much more our Duty to do so *in Publick* or *at Church*. The other Place of Scripture aforementioned, namely *Hebrews* 12. 28, 29. will fall very Properly under the Second general Head of this Discourse, which I shall now enter upon.

II.

I am to shew, that *our Eternal Salvation depends* on the Practice of a *Decent and Reverent Behaviour in Church*, as well as on the Practice of any other Religious Duty. And this is so plainly taught in *Heb.* 12. 28, 29. that I need but consider the Import of that Place of Scripture, which runs thus, leaving out the former part of v. 28. *Let us have Grace, whereby we may serve God ACCEPTABLY with REVERENCE, and Godly Fear. For our God is a Consuming Fire.* Where we are plainly taught,

1. That such as truly *have Grace*, will not fail to *serve God with Reverence and Godly Fear*; and therefore on the other hand, that All such as do *Not serve God with Reverence and Godly Fear*, have *Not the Grace* of God, whatever they may think of themselves to the contrary.

2. We are here taught, that if we will *serve* God *ACCEPTABLY*, we must *serve him with Reverence and Godly Fear*. So that it hence plainly appears, that Gods *Accepting* or *Not accepting* of our serving him, *depends on this*, namely on our serving God *with* or *without* Reverence and Godly Fear. And this is the same as to say, that *Our Eternal Salvation* or *Damnation depends* on our serving God *with* or *without* Reverence and Godly Fear. Namely, if we serve God *with* Reverence and Godly Fear, then God will *accept* our Service, as being such as it should be, and so Pleasing to him, and will *reward* it with *Eternal Salvation*. But if we serve God *without* Reverence and Godly Fear, then God will *not accept* our Service, it being not such as it should be, but Displeasing and Offensive to him, and He will punish it with *Eternal Damnation*, without a speedy and sincere Repentance and Amendment for the future.

It appears therefore, how infinitely and sadly they are Mistaken, who hope that their bare *Being at Church* will be a Means to *save* them, tho' they never or seldom take care to serve God there *with Reverence and Godly Fear*, but do generally, if not Always, behave themselves in an *Undecent* and *Irreverent* Behaviour. Such must know, that it may be truly said of Them, (what St Paul says of such as come to the Sacrament Unworthily, 1 Cor. 11. 17. namely) that they *come together* or to Church, *not for the Better, but for the Worse*, that is, their *Coming thus to Church* do's not further their *Salvation*,

Salvation, but increase their Damnation. And indeed it is Strange, that so many should be Afraid, or at least pretend to be Afraid, to *come to the Sacrament* for Fear of *coming Unworthily*; and yet it should never be heard of, that Any should be Afraid, or pretend to be Afraid, of *Coming to Church* or the Common Service of God, for Fear of *Coming Unworthily*. For it is Certain, that there is an *Holy Disposition and Preparation* requisite for to *fit* Persons to come to the *Common Publick Service* of the Church *Worthily*, or so as to Come thereto in the Language of St Paul, *for the Better, and not for the Worse*; as well as there is an *Holy Disposition and Preparation* requisite to *fit* Persons to come to the *Sacrament* of the Lord's Supper *Worthily*, or so as to Come thereto *for the Better, and Not for the Worse*. To this End it is usual in Books of Devotion to set down Prayers to be said *Before going to Church*, and at *first Coming into Church*; as is done in the Book of Prayers belonging to my Exposition of the Church-Catechism. And as St Paul has taught us, 1 Cor: II. 29. that *He that eats and drinks Unworthily* of the Lord's Supper, *eats and drinks Damnation to Himself, not Discerning the Lord's Body*; so for the like Reason it is as True, that *He that prays Unworthily, prays Damnation to Himself, not Discerning God's special Presence and Divine Majesty*. Namely, as He is said by St Paul *not to discern the LORD's Body* in partaking of the Lord's Supper who makes not a due Difference or Distinction between eating of the Lord's Supper and eating of a Common Meal, but eats and drinks

drinks of the Lord's Supper with *no more Reverence*, than He eats and drinks of a Common Meal; at least *without* that *most Holy and Profound Reverence* of Body as well as Soul, wherewith He ought to partake of the L O R D's Body; and consequently such an one by his *Irreverent* Eating and Drinking of the Lord's Supper, do's but *Sin*, and thereby eat and drink *Damnation* to Himself: So He do's *not discern* G O D's *special Presence and Divine Majesty*, who makes not a due Difference or Distinction between speaking to God in Prayer and speaking to a Man; but prays to God with *no more Reverence* than He would speak to a Man, at least *without* that *most Holy and Profound Reverence* of Body as well as Soul, wherewith He ought to speak, especially in Prayer, to G O D, who is KING of Kings, and LORD of Lords: And consequently such an One by his Praying or Speaking to God in an *Irreverent* Manner, do's but *Sin*, and thereby pray *Damnation* to Himself. Wherefore, as the Danger of receiving the Sacrament unworthily, and thereby of eating and drinking *Damnation* to themselves, do's, by no means *excuse Men from* Coming to the Sacrament, but only *lays the greatest Obligation* upon them to come Worthily, and therefore *Reverently*: So the Danger of praying Unworthily, and thereby praying *Damnation* to themselves do's by no means *excuse Men from* Coming to Prayers, but only *lays the greatest Obligation* upon them to pray Worthily, and therefore *Reverently*. And indeed since Prayer is one great Means appointed by God for obtaining

Salvation;

Salvation; how Far must they be from having any good Ground to hope for Salvation, *whose very Prayers are turn'd into Sin* (*Psal. 109. 7.*) by Want of behaving themselves with due Reverence, while they are Praying; and consequently *whose very Prayers*, instead of being a Means of their Salvation, are by their Irreverence and Wickedness made a Means of their Damnation?

What has been hitherto said, under this second general Head, tho' it serves chiefly to shew the Necessity of Reverence in Church, *during the Times* of Divine Service, yet it serves not only to That, but also to shew the Necessity of Reverence in Church, *even at all Times, and out of the Time* of Divine Service. For if we have a true Reverence and Fear of God, and will serve him Acceptably, we must do *whatever* God has commanded us to do; forasmuch as whatever God has commanded us to do, the Doing thereof is thereby become *Part of the Service* of God. Wherefore since God has expressly commanded Us, no less than Twice, (*Levit. 19. 30, and 26. 2.*) to *Reverence his Sanctuary or Church*, as such, and consequently at *All Times*, (as has been above prov'd) if We have a true Reverence and Fear of God, we shall thereby be influenc'd to serve God in duly obeying *this* his Command to *reverence his Church*, as well as in obeying his *Other* Commands.

Indeed whosoever refuses or wilfully neglects to obey *this* Command of God to *Reverence his Church*, does thereby render his observing the *other* Commands of God of no Use or Benefit to Himself; but He shall be esteemed and dealt with

with by God, as one that has obey'd *none* of his Commands. For it is a very gross Mistake to think, that we may *Compound* with God for our Obedience, or that God will graciously excuse us the *Not obeying Some* of his Commands, so we be but Careful to *obey Others*. And yet as gross as this Mistake is, there is but too much Reason to fear, that this Mistake obtains as Generally now adays among Us, as it did Formerly among the *Jews*. Wherefore to remedy it among us, I shall here make use of the same Argument, which St *James* made use of to remedy it among the *Jews*, in *Chap. 2. v. 10, 11.* of his Epistle.

Whosoever shall keep the Whole Law, and offend but in One Point, namely Wilfully, He is Guilty of All, that is, He is esteem'd in the sight of God as Guilty of transgressing All the Law; and shall be Damned as such, without Repentance for his former Offending Wilfully in the One Point, and unless He shall for the Future keep also that One Point. And then the Apostle goes on to shew the Reasonableness and Justice of God's dealing thus: For He that said, Do not commit Adultery, said also, Do not Kill. Now if thou commit no Adultery, yet if thou Kill, thou art become a Transgressor of the Law, that is, a Transgressor of the whole Law in the sight of God: Forasmuch as by transgressing One Command of the Law, thou violates and sets at naught That Authority, on which the Whole Law, is founded; and thereby declarest, that thy Obedience to any Command is not Owing to thy Reverence for God's Authority, but

but thy own Will and Inclination. So that God may without thy Repentance most justly Damn Thee for such a Wilful Transgression of One Command, forasmuch as thereby it appears, that *at the Bottom* Thou art One that has *No true* Fear of God, but art a *Despiser* of his Authority.

Such is the Full Scope and Force of the Argument made use of by St *James*; which apply'd to the present Case will stand thus: *Whosoever shall keep All the rest of the whole Law and Offend but in This One Point Wilfully*, namely in not Reverencing the Sanctuary or Church of God, whenever he goes into it; *He is in the sight of God Guilty of transgressing All the Law.* For he that said, *Ye shall keep my Sabbath*, (Levit. 19. 30, and 26. 2.) said also in the same Texts, *Ye shall reverence my Sanctuary or Church.* Now if thou keep the Sabbath, yet if thou reverence not the Sanctuary or Church, Thou art become in the sight of God a Transgressor of the whole Law; and shalt be dealt with as such, without special Repentance for Not reverencing the Church the time past of thy Life, and Amendment for the Future by Reverencing the Church, as God has commanded.

Indeed this Passage of St *James* is, what People ought to be frequently put in mind of, it being of most excellent Use to teach them, that *Whatever* God commands to be done, does thereby become absolutely *Necessary* to be done, as a Necessary Means or Condition of *Salvation*, how *Little* soever the thing may really be in it self, or they may imagine it to be.

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There is still one Consideration more for *Behaving our selves Reverently in Church*, which is contain'd in the foremention'd *Heb. 12. 28, 29.* and remains to be here taken Notice of; and it is this, that *Our God is a Consuming Fire.* St Paul from *v. 18,* to *v. 21* of this same Chapter, puts the *Hebrews* in mind of the Terrible manner, wherein God appear'd to their Forefathers at *Mount Sina*, namely with *Burning Fire, and Blackness, and Darknes, and Tempest*; insomuch that *so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake, v. 21.* After which St Paul intimates the Goodness of God in not appearing to us Christians in our Churches after so Terrible a manner; (*v. 22. &c.*) but withal teaches us (*v. 28, 29.*) that altho' God do's of his Goodness Not appear to us in our Churches after so Terrible a manner, yet nevertheless we ought to take Care to *serve God with REVERENCE and Godly FEAR*, that is, with a Fear suitable to the Supreme and most Tremendous or Dreadful Majesty of God, and so with the Greatest Fear and Awe. Forasmuch as if we did *not serve God thus*, we should *not serve him Acceptably*, but displease and provoke Him by our Irreverence in his Service, which He would most Certainly and Severely punish, He being full under the Gospel as well as under the Law a *Consuming or Burning Fire*, which will certainly destroy All such as serve him *Not with Reverence and Godly Fear.* In short, as Christians are too apt to rely on the *Mercy* of God, and thereby to become Careless of that Reverent and Awful Behaviour

haviour which is due to the *Majesty* of God, as wrongly imagining that God of his *Mercy* will easily *forgive* such their *Misbehaviour*: So to rectify this pernicious Mistake, the Apostle here puts Us in mind, that *Our God*, that is, the God of Us Christians, tho' He be indeed a *Merciful* God, yet he is also a *Consuming Fire*: and as such, will *not forgive*, but *most severely and eternally punish* such as do *not serve him Acceptably*, namely with *Reverence and Godly Fear*. So that from this Passage of *Heb. 12. 28, 29.* it most plainly appears, that we are most strictly bound to *behave Ourselves Reverently in Church*, forasmuch as our *Eternal Salvation depends* on the Practice of such a Reverent Behaviour, as well as the Practice of any other Religious Duty: Which was the Point to be proved under this second general Head.

III.

I proceed now to the third General, which is to shew, how Persons according to their several *Stations and Places*, are bound to do *what in them lies*, in order to *make Others* behave themselves *Reverently in Church*. And in the first Place from what has been said, it clearly follows, that it is the great Duty of all *Ministers*, to take *special Care* to *instruct their People*, concerning this *Necessity* of a Reverent Behaviour in Church: Forasmuch as it is the indispensable Duty of Ministers to instruct their People in *All things Necessary to Salvation*: It is Never to be forgot by us Ministers, what God says to *Ezekiel*, Chap. 3. 17.—19. *Son of Man, I have made thee a Watchman to the House of Israel: therefore hear the Word at my Mouth,*

Mouth, and give them Warning from me. When I say to the Wicked, Thou shalt surely Dye; and Thou GIVEST him NOT WARNING, nor SPEAKEST to WARN the Wicked from his Wickedness to save his Life; the same Wicked Man shall Dye in his Iniquity; but HIS BLOOD will I REQUIRE at THY HAND. Now it has been shewn, that God has Commanded, that Men should not only serve HIM with Reverence and Godly Fear, but also should Reverence his Sanctuary or Church. Whosoever therefore do's not do so, thereby transgresses the Commands of God, and becomes a Sinner, and without Repentance shall surely dye: And if his Minister has not given him Warning, nor spoken to warn the said wicked Person from such his Wickedness or Irreverent Behaviour; the same wicked Man shall dye in his Iniquity; but his Blood will God require at the hand of his said Minister. Which Consideration surely carries in it Weight enough, for to make any Minister not to Fear Warning Any Person, let him be who he will, of such his Wickedness or Irreverence, Rather than to render himself Responsible to God for the Blood or Miscarriage of such a Man.

I should in Charity have willingly suppos'd, that there was no Minister Faulty in this Respect; but I have Accidentally light upon some, to whom taking Notice of their Sin in behaving themselves so Undecently and Irreverently in Church; they answered Me, that they behaved themselves no Otherwise, than it was Usual for themselves and Others to do in their Own Parish-Church, and that without their Mi-

nisters ever finding Fault with them, or telling them they ought not to behave themselves in such a Manner. Now if common Charity obliges me to suppose these Persons to speak Truth, then my Duty to God obliges me to take this Publick Notice, How highly Sinful to God and Destructive to his Own Soul, any *Ministers Neglect* of instructing his People in this great Duty must be.

But it is not to be thought, that *Ministers Alone*, are bound to do what in them lies, that Others behave themselves *Reverently in Church*. For All other Persons (as well as Ministers) are bound to promote God's Glory, and therefore to do the same, so far forth as lies in their Power, according to the several *Stations or Offices* they are in. Hence every *Father and Mother* is bound to take Care, that their *Children* do behave themselves Reverently in Church. And in like manner every *Master and Mistress* is bound to take Care, that their *Scholars*, and *Apprentices* or *Servants* do behave themselves Reverently in Church.

And as God, by giving *Gentlemen* Riches and large Estates, has thereby given to them also some Power, and Authority, or Influence over their *Tenants* and other *Inferiors*; so *Gentlemen* are obliged (as in other respects, so specially in Gratitude to God for giving them such Plentiful Estates) to make Use of their Authority and Influence over their *Tenants* and other *Inferiors*, to make them glorify God All the Ways they can, and so particularly by behaving themselves *Reverently in Gods House or Church*. And to this End Gentlemen are most bounden to
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give good Example to All their Inferiors, in this and all other Religious Duty. And if they be *Justices of the Peace*, or the like, then such Gentlemen are bound in Duty to God, to make Use of the Civil Power and Authority they have, to bring Men to a Reverent Behaviour in God's House.

And lastly, *Church-wardens* are bound in a more than ordinary manner, to take Care that Persons behave themselves Reverently in Church: Forasmuch as besides the Common Obligations they have to do so, as *Christians*, or *Parents*, or *Masters* or the like, they are moreover oblig'd thereto by a most solemn Oath. So that if they do not do their Duty herein, they not only sin as others do, but are particularly guilty of the great and heinous Sin of Perjury. For by the hundred and eleventh Canon it is injoin'd, that in all Visitations of Bishops and Arch-deacons, the Church-wardens shall truly and personally PRESENT the Names of All those, who behave themselves Rudely and Disorderly in the Church; or who by Untimely Ringing of Bells, by Walking, Talking, or other Noise shall hinder the Minister or Preacher.

And the Church-wardens are further taught by the eighteenth Canon, whom they are to judge to behave themselves Rudely and Disorderly in the Church; namely All such as observe not the Directions given in the said Canon for Reverence and Attention to be us'd within the Church in Time of Divine Service; which Directions are in short these: No Man shall cover his Head, except he have some Infirmary; in which case, let him wear a Night-Cap or Coif. All

manner of Persons then present shall Reverently kneel upon their Knees, when the general Confession, Litany, and other Prayers are read; and shall stand up at the saying of the Belief, according to the Rules in that behalf prescrib'd in the Book of Common Prayer: And likewise when the Lord JESUS shall be mention'd, due and lowly Reverence shall be done by all Persons present. None, either Man, Woman, or Child, of what Calling soever, shall be Otherwise busied, than in Quiet Attendance to Hear, Mark, and Understand that which is Read, Preach'd or Minister'd; saying in their due Places Audibly with the Minister, the Confession, the Lord's Prayer and the Creed; and making such other Answers to the Publick Prayers, as are appointed in the Book of Common Prayer: Neither shall they Disturb the Service or Sermon, by Walking or Talking or Any other Way, or depart out of Church during the Time of Service or Sermon, without some urgent or reasonable Cause.

Now Whosoever does wilfully neglect or refuse to Observe the Directions in the foresaid 18th Canon, does thereby become One that behaves himself Rudely and Disorderly in the Church; and so One that the Church-wardens are bound to Present by the Hundred and Eleventh Canon afore set down; and consequently if the Church-wardens do not present such an One at the next Visitation, they become themselves guilty of the dreadful Sin of Perjury: Forasmuch as the Church-wardens Oath stands thus, *You shall swear, that you will Faithful and True*

True PRESENTMENT make of all Defaults, Vices, and Irregularities committed in your Parish, which to your Knowledge are Presentable by the Ecclesiastical Laws of this Realm.

I have set down the foresaid Canons, that *All others* as well as Church-wardens may the Better understand their Duty, as to that Reverent Behaviour they ought to use in Church. And that This may be still better understood, I proceed to the 4th and last general Head above proposed: which was this:

IV.

To take Notice of *Certain Particulars*, which are inconsistent with a Reverent Behaviour in the Time of Divine Service; and which therefore ought to be presently Reformed, by All such as will discharge their Duty to God.

I. Whereas then it is requir'd in the 18th Canon, (agreeably to the Rules of Scripture and the Practice of the Saints of Old, and the Apostles, and our Blessed Saviour himself,) that *All manner of Persons shall REVERENTLY KNEEL* upon their Knees, when the general Confession, Litany, and Other Prayers are read; it is inconsistent with or contrary to this Rule for to Kneel in a Careless, Lolling, or any other Irreverent manner, which shews that we have not a due Reverence and Awe of GOD before whom we Kneel. It is also more plainly inconsistent with our Duty in this Case, to Stand when we should Kneel, except we be disabled from Kneeling by the Gout or some other Infirmity; and then God will indeed graciously accept of our Willingness to Kneel if we could.

instead

instead of our actually Kneeling; if so be we stand in a Reverent manner. But still more Inconsistent with our Duty in this Case is *sitting down*, this being the most Familiar Posture, and consequently such, as common Manners teach the most Clownish; is not fit to be Used, when they are *Praying* for any Favour of One that is *much Above* them, especially of their *King*. How much more plainly then do's Common Reason and Manners teach the most Clownish and Ignorant, that they ought much less to *sit down*, when they are *Praying* for the greatest Favours, to G O D, who is the KING of Kings.

2. As it is Our Duty to *Kneel, Reverently*, when we are directed so to *Kneel* by the Rules in the Common Prayer Book, so it is our Duty to *stand, Reverently*, when directed to stand by the Rules of the said Book. And therefore for to *stand in a Lolling* or any other *Careless* and *Irreverent* Posture; is inconsistent with our Duty to God; and much more is it so, to *sit down*, when we should so *stand*.

3. It is particularly taken Notice of by the 18th Canon, that *No Man, Woman or Child* ought to be *Otherwise busied, than in Quiet Attendance to hear, mark and understand what is Read or Preach'd*, and the like. Wherefore it is Inconsistent with a Reverent Behaviour in Divine Service, for Any to spend their Time there in *Gazing upon Others*, and *Making Observations upon Others* as to their Dress or the like. As it is also for Any to *talk* One with the Other (tho' it be not so loud, as to disturb the rest.

rest of the Congregation,) or to *Read any thing* but what is Reading by the Minister as Part of Divine Service. As for *Children*, it is indeed Commendable in Parents, to bring them to Church, as soon as they are any Ways *sensible* of their Duty to God, and so *Capable* of being taught and made to behave themselves there *Decently*. But to bring them to Church, and there suffer them to *talk or play*, or make a Noise, or to be any ways *Unquiet*, is only to bring them to Church to *disturb the Service* of God; and therefore it is Inconsistent with that Reverence Parents owe to God's House and Service; and instead of *Pleasing G O D*, such Parents do but *displease G O D* thereby: Forasmuch as at the Bottom they bring such Children to Church, not to *teach them their Duty to God*, (for if they did it for this, they would not suffer them to do Any thing in Church that is Undecent;) but either to *humour* and *please their Children* by going Abroad; or else because there is some *Inconvenience to their Own Affairs* in leaving them at Home, or the like.

4. It is particularly observ'd in the 18th Canon, that it is the Duty of such as are at Church, to *say Audibly with the Minister, the Confession, the Lord's Prayer, and the Creed; and to make such other Answers as are appointed in the Book of Common Prayer*. Wherefore such behave themselves in a Manner inconsistent with their Duty, who *Never or Seldom* say any of the foremention'd Parts of the Publick Service. Nor is it a sufficient Excuse for any one to say that *He hath not got a Com-*

mon Prayer Book. For I dare say, there will be no one or very few found so Poor, that can read, but what in a Years time spends More Idly than a Common Prayer Book would cost him. And the same I fear may be too truly said of Those, that want Bibles. Whereas it is very Requisite for All Persons that can read, to provide themselves both Bibles and Common Prayer Books, and to bring them to Church with them; and therein to go along the Service with the Minister in such a Manner as is prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer. Forasmuch as this would be the Best way to keep them from Gazing about with their Eyes, or Wandring with their Thoughts; and would help them to know Aright, what they may not be able sometimes to hear Exactly their Minister pronounce.

Besides there is another good Use to be made of the Common Prayer Book, in order to behave Ones self as one Ought in Divine Service. Forasmuch as the Governours of our Church being duly Sensible of the Necessity of serving God *with Reverence and Godly Fear*, if we will serve him *Acceptably*, have therefore set down in the Common Prayer Book *Directions*, how Persons *ought to behave* themselves through the several Parts of Divine Service. Which Directions are still commonly call'd *the Rubrick*, because they were wont Formerly to be Printed in *Rubrick* or *Red Letters*; whereas now adays they are Printed in a *Smaller and Blacker* Letter. Thus before *Almighty and Most Merciful Father*, &c. is set down this Rule for the Behaviour of the Congregation:

A

A General Confession to be said of the WHOLE Congregation after the Minister, All KNEELING. So after *Almighty and Most Merful Father, &c.* or the foresaid Confession, is set down this Rule; *The Absolution or Remission of Sins to be pronounced by the Priest ALONE STANDING, the People still KNEELING.* And so on

Now it is not to be imagin'd, that these Rules or Directions of Reverent Behaviour are *Arbitrary* or only made according to the *Meer Will and Fancies* of the *Governors* of the Church: No, on the contrary they are *founded on the Reason and Nature of Things*, and so are *most Agreeable to the Will of God*, and consequently *Not to be neglected without sinning against God.* For it is to be known, that *every Minister or Priest* (as well as *High-Priest*) is *ordain'd FOR MEN* in things *pertaining UNTO GOD*, as *St Paul* observes, *Heb. 5. 1.* So that every Minister is to be consider'd under a *Double Capacity*, while he is performing *Divine Service.* In some parts thereof He acts in behalf of *Himself* and the *People*, in other Parts he acts in behalf of *God.* Thus whilst He is reading the Confession, and begging Pardon for the *Sins* both of the *People* and *Himself*, it is but *Proper*, and therefore he is directed by the Rules of the Church, to *Kneel Himself* as well as the *People.* But whilst He is reading the Absolution, or Pronouncing the *Forgiveness* of Sins to all true Penitents, He acts herein in the *behalf of GOD*, who Alone has Power to forgive Sins; and therefore as acting herein in the behalf (Not

(Not of Himself or the People, but) of GOD, it is but Proper to shew his Authority as the Minister of GOD, and therefore he is directed to *STAND Himself*, while he pronounces the Absolution; and the People are directed *still to Kneel*, as the most suitable Posture, wherein to receive the Absolution or Forgiveness of their Sins from GOD, or which comes to the same, from GOD's Minister in God's stead. And this is also the Reason why the *Minister Alone* is directed to *pronounce the Absolution*, as what particularly belongs to him as the *Minister of God*. Which I the rather take Notice of, because some Well-meaning People for want of Observing this, are wont to *read or say along* with the Minister the Absolution as well as Confession, and so to do what is Improper for them.

And the *like Good Reasons* are there for *Varying* the several Postures both of Minister and People through the whole Divine Service. So that there could not perhaps be a More Likely Means to make People behave themselves *Reverently*, or as the Rubrick or Rules of our excellent Church direct, than for Ministers to *Explain* to their People the *Reasons*, whereon *are founded* the several Rules of the Church concerning the different Behaviour of Minister and People, thro' the several Parts of Divine Service. It is what I did at my first Coming to my Parish of *Cotesbach* in *Leicestershire*, and I thank God Not without good Effect; and I hope by God's Blessing to meet with the same Good Effect, upon a second Trial of the same Proper Means elsewhere. Sure I am, this may be the most justly esteem'd One part of *Catechizing*, and that None of the Less Necessary.

As

As for such as are so unhappy as Not to be Able to Read, whether it be owing to *their Own Fault*, (which they ought to *Repent* of in a special Manner,) or to the Fault of *their Parents*, they ought nevertheless to behave themselves No less *Reverently* than Others; and therefore to *learn* their Duty in this Case from *seeing* and *following* the good *Example* of Others; and so Kneeling Reverently and Standing, when they see the Rest of the Congregation Kneel or Stand, &c.

5. Particular Direction is given in the 18th and 111th Canons, that No Disturbance be made in Divine Service by *Walking*, or *Talking*, or *any other Noise*. Wherefore whosoever makes a *Noise*, either by *Treading Hard*, or *Stamping* with their Feet, while they go up into any Gallery; or by *clashing* together any Pew or Seat Door; or by coming into Church with *Pattins*, or the like; do thereby offend against this Direction, and behave themselves *Undecently* and *Irreverently*. It is commonly esteem'd a piece of Manners and Respect, when we are in the House of a Great Person, to behave our selves there *Quietly and without Noise*. And much more ought we to shew the like *Respect*, when we come *into the House of God*, and more especially while the Service of G O D is performing, which can't be duly perform'd, where or while there is a *Noise*.

6. Since the Church by Consecration, is not only *set apart for God's Service*, but also is *given to God*, so as that it becomes G O D's *House* by a *Special Right* he has to it, and by a *Special Possession* which he takes of it;

hence it clearly follows, that as the Church ought not to be employ'd to any other Use; so No Man has, or can have, due Right or Authority to Dispose of a Church to any Other Use, or to Allow that it may be employ'd to any Other Use. Hence I cannot but wonder, how it comes to pass to be thought No Fault by some, to let Children be taught in the Church, as in a Common School. Is not this making Use of the Church, as a Common Place, and so Profaning it? Is it not impossible for Children to be taught there, but that Much will be both said and done there, which is altogether Inconsistent with the Reverence requir'd by God to be shewn to his Church? Do's it not plainly tend to breed up such Children in a Mean Notion of the Church, as of a Common Place; and consequently do's it not tend to beget in them Irreverence to the Church, and so to train them up in Sin? A great Deal more might be added to shew, that this Practice is very Unjustifiable. But I shall add but one Consideration More, which is this: That if Enquiry be made to the Bottom or Reason of this Practice, it will be found No better than this, viz. to save the Parishoners or School-master the Charge of Hiring an House or Place for to teach the Children in. Bold Horrid Impiety! That ever Christians should be so Ignorant or so Wicked, as Not to Scruple to make Use of God's House as a Common Place, and so to Profane it, Only to save themselves a little Charge! What is this but to Act just upon the same Wicked Worldly Principle, as Those do, who take upon them to give Leave to their Servants to go see their Friends or

or the like *on the LORD's Day*, only because they will *not spare them from their Own Worldly* Business on any *other Day*. But God will make All such Persons know One Day, that No one has any Right to give Leave to Others to make Use of *his HOUSE or DAY* to any Other Occasion, than to *Attend his Service*.

7. If it be thus Unwarrantable to *teach Children in the Church*, then it is plainly so Much more, to *give Notice in Church of Any thing Lost*, or of any *Common Civil or Worldly Business to be done*. For what is this but to make a *Market-place of the Church*, and so likewise to profane it? And 'tis strange how such things came ever to be permitted to be Once done in any Church.

8. As for the Choice of *Church-wardens and Overseers of the Poor*, they being Offices belonging in a *special Manner to the Service of GOD and his Church*, therefore what relates to them, may be *Properly* enough done in the Church; so Care be taken that Nothing be said or done, but what is agreeable to the Reverence due to the Church. But as for the Choice of other Offices, as *Constables, &c.* their Offices not relating in a *special Manner to the Service of God or his Church*, but only to the *Common Affairs of the State*; therefore what relates to them, is *Not proper* to be transacted in the Church, but ought to be transacted Elsewhere. What more relates to this Head, is fully enough express'd in the 88th Canon, whereby it is requir'd and commanded, that *the Church-wardens or Quest-Men and their Assistants shall Suffer*

Suffer no Plays, Feasts, Banquets, Suppers, Church-Ales, Drinkings, Temporal Courts or Leets, Lay-juries, Musters, or any other Profane Usage, to be kept in the Church, Chapel, or Church-Yard; Neither the Bells to be rung Superstitiously, upon Holy-days or Eves abrogated by the Book of Common Prayer; nor at any other Time, without Good Cause to be Allow'd by the Minister of the Place, and by themselves.

9. There remains still one more Particular, which I can't omit taking Notice of, as altogether *Inconsistent* with a due *Reverence* to God and his House, the Church: And that is, *Backwardness* or *Unwillingness* to *Contribute Liberally* according to ones Ability, to the *Building, Rebuilding, Repairing, Beautifying, and Adorning of Churches*, especially *ones Own Parish Church*. Surely such Persons as are Faulty herein, are ignorant of the special Blessings, which God has vouchsafed to Those that have been *Zealous* for the *Honour of his House*. Surely they are ignorant, that God has expressly Commanded them, to *Honour him with their Substance*, that is, by *Liberally contributing* Not only to keep the Church in *bare Repair*, but to keep it in a *Decent and Beautiful State and Condition*, like the *House of G O D*, like a *Palace of the King of Kings*; and consequently to have All that belongs to it, of the *Best* sort and *Fashion* (so far forth as their Ability will reach) as being for the *Use and Service of G O D*. Surely such Persons forget or know not, that they are only *G O D's Stewards*, whatever Estate or Riches they have; and therefore when God requires them to

Contribute

Contribute to his Church, He only demands of them *somewhat* of That which is His Own, and which they are only *entrusted with* for the present, to *lay out chiefly* to his Service and Honour; and that as soon as they dye, they must give a strict Account of this their Stewardship to God. What Fear and Dread shall seize such Persons, when being call'd to give an Account of Their Stewardship to God, they shall be put in mind, that they have in their Life time *grudg'd every Farthing*, that they laid out upon the House of God, when at the same time they could spend *Sums*, in building Houses for themselves: That in their Life time they thought their Church *Well enough* for God's Service, tho' it was *very Mean*, and wanted *very much to be Beautify'd*, whereas they were Careful and thought not much of being at Charges to keep *their Own Houses Neat and Fine*: Lastly, that they thought in their Life time that any *Ordinary Bible or Common Prayer Book, any Pulpit-Cloth, any Ordinary Cloth or Vessels for the Communion Table*, were *Good enough* for the Church; and therefore would give as *Little* as possibly they could toward such things; whereas at the same time they would *Readily buy the Best Goods* their Ability could reach to, for their *Own Houses*. What Dread and Horror must, I say, fall on such Persons, when being Dead and call'd by God to give Account of their Lives here, it shall be made appear to them, that They have thus *preferr'd themselves before God*, and have thus far took more Care of their *Own Houses*, than of *God's*. What would such Persons Then give, that

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that they had been more *Zealous* for the *House of God*, and given *Liberally* to the *Keeping* of it even in a *Beautiful State* and *Condition*, somewhat suitable to the *Service* of *God*: Forasmuch as *God* then would have largely *Rewarded* them for thus *Reverencing* his *Church*; whereas on the contrary they can in their *Case* expect only to be severely *Punish'd* for *Not Reverencing* his *Church*.

A great deal more might be added, to shew the great and indispensable *Duty* of *showing Reverence* to *God* and his *Church*, by *Liberally contributing* to *Churches*, as *Occasion* requires. But I need not do it here, having not long since publish'd a particular and large *Discourse* on that *Subject*; to which I shall therefore refer such *Readers*, as are *Desirous* to be more *Fully* instructed in this part of their *Duty*, and also to be inform'd of the *special Blessing* belonging to the *Discharge* of this *Duty*. I shall only add here, that I have some *Thoughts* of *contracting* that *Discourse*, for the *Benefit* of the *Common People*, when I can get *Time* for it. In the mean while let such read the *Prophet Haggai*, and consider there *God's* dealing with the *Jews*, for *Neglecting* to build &c. his *House*.

God of his infinite *Mercy* grant, that this *Discourse* may have its due *Effect*, by *Convincing* such as shall read it, of their *Duty* to *Reverence* *God's Sanctuary* or *Church*, at *All Times*; and more especially to *serve* *God* therein with *Reverence* and *Godly Fear*, if they would *serve* him *Acceptably*. Amen, for *Christ* his *Sake*, Amen.

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F I N I S.